

Disposition of a U.S. Citizen's Remains in India

The U.S. Consulate General Hyderabad serves American citizens in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. For information on the U.S Embassy and consulates serving other regions, please visit: <http://hyderabad.usconsulate.gov/service.html>

MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL:

Local regulations require that the deceased must be cremated, buried or embalmed preferably within 24 hours of the death. Only embalmed remains can be held in cold storage until further instructions are received from the next of kin for consignment of the remains.

(1) EMBALMING:

Embalming is only required when remains are to be exported, not for local burial. Embalming facilities are available in three places in Hyderabad - Gandhi Hospital, Osmania General Hospital and Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences. Embalming procedures can only commence with permission from local authorities. The local customs and health department officials are cooperative in emergencies. Delays are encountered when deaths occur outside of regular business hours, when the death occurs in a place other than a hospital or when there is no medical attendant present.

(2) CREMATION:

In India open air cremation is common. The deceased is placed atop a funeral bier, usually adjacent to moving water, in full view of loved ones. Ashes may be disposed of immediately following cremation. An official certificate of cremation prepared under the authority of the burial ground accompanies the remains. If the funeral director is authorized by the family to bury the remains a permit for the local disposition of remains must remain with the cremated remains. Regulations regarding this may vary with locality.

(3) CASKETS AND CONTAINERS:

When the body of the deceased person is to be transported out of the country, the body is first embalmed and prepared for shipment. The usual procedure is to place the embalmed remains in a zinc coffin within a wooden coffin, which is finally placed in a suitable packing case. The cost varies with the quality of material used. Export quality caskets and shipping containers, which meet the requirements, are available for shipment out of the country.

(5) EXPORT OF REMAINS:

Remains may be exported when fully embalmed and placed in a hermetically sealed container.

Human remains: To export remains, the following documents are required:

- (a) A death certificate or post-mortem report (which does not have to show cause of death);
- (b) Embalming certificate issued by the doctor;

- (c) Export authorization issued by the Health Officer, Department of Health;
- (d) Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by a Consular Officer;
- (e) Affidavit by the undertaker attesting to contents, the embalming and the hermetical casket sealing.

Human Ashes: To export ashes, the following documents are required:

- (a) Cremation certificate issued by the crematorium;
- (b) Official death certificate
- (c) Consular mortuary certificate issued by a consular officer (required by the airlines).

(4) COSTS:

The estimated charges shown below are based on U.S. Consulate exchange rate of (US\$1=INR48). All costs are **approximate** and are based on quotations received from the undertakers.

Local burial in cemetery:

Estimated local burial costs include land charges, a masonry grave liner, a coffin prepared to regulation specifications, legal documentation and undertaker fees. **\$700**

Cremation and local burial:

Estimated cremation costs include transportation of remains to the crematorium facilities, land charges, the casket, and use of a hearse, cremation/burial fees, funeral director's fees, the cemetery plot, and the container for ashes. **\$500**

Cremation and shipment of ashes by air to U.S:

Estimated cost includes casket, use of a hearse, crematorium charges, container of ashes and undertaker fees. Air shipment charges for cremated ashes are not included; the cost is calculated as per airway bill and destination. **\$300**

Embalming and shipment of remains by air to the U.S:

Price includes embalming, necessary packing cases (coffin box, inner zinc box and outer packing case) sealing, labor, legal documentation, local transportation and charges of the undertaker and air shipment estimates. **\$2500**

NOTE: All prices quoted above are estimated shipping costs only and may be subject to change. In case of deaths outside Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh there would be an additional cost of transporting the body from the place of death to Hyderabad. Air shipment estimates vary depending on the destination in the U.S.

(5) EXHUMATION:

Bodies may be exhumed provided the required permits are obtained from the local magistrate. A statement is required to accompany the request for exhumation to indicate if the remains are being exhumed for reburial or cremation.

(6) AUTOPSY:

In India autopsies, also known as postmortems or postmortem examinations may be performed at the request of the authorities in cases of unexplained and suspicious deaths, or where a physician did not attend the death. In other circumstances, post-mortem examinations may be performed only with the consent of the deceased's family or with permission granted by the person himself before death. Generally, an autopsy is only done when there is some doubt as to the cause of death, although the family of the deceased can always request an autopsy even if the hospital does not think it necessary. The time taken to establish the medical cause of death may take up to 26 weeks and sometimes longer.

Names and Addresses of Undertakers:

Heaven Bound Funeral Services
Contact Person: Ivor Fernandez
Plot No. 2 RTC Colony, Trimulgherry
Secunderabad 500015
Mobile Phone: 91 9849439580 / Cell Phone 91 40 65297189

Kumar & Co. Company / SV Ambulance (Member of International Association of Travel Agents [IATA], can also arrange for customs clearance)
Contact Person: Umeshwar Sangam
1-3-183/40/79 SBI Colony, Near LIC Zonal Office
Gandhi Nagar, Hyderabad 500084
Mobile Phone: 91 98487-07276 / 91 97018-58888 / 91 98483-90879